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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an inservice teacher education program--its development and its attempts to prepare teachers for urban environments. As the result of a collaborative venture between the University of St. Thomas (Minnesota), the American Federation of Teachers Local 59, and the Minneapolis (Minnesota) school district, a distinctive master's degree program emerged. The link between the union and the school of education offers joint development of courses and on-site graduate study at the union office complex. Both the university and the union believe that institutions of higher education must respond to the specific needs of learners regardless of setting and become partners in educational reform. In the partnership, the higher education institution brings research on effective instruction and models varied methods of delivery. The union and K-12 teachers contribute their current strategies for cross-curricular teaching and their perspectives on classroom organization and management. The document's appendixes provide a list of course requirements and a schedule for the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction K-12 program, and both a course schedule and licensing requirements for a Master of Arts degree in Early Childhood Special Education. (Contains 16 references.) (LL)

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ED 362 501

Collaboration in Education: The Urban Master's Program

by

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Running head: THE URBAN MASTER'S PROGRAM

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Abstract

This paper will describe a collaborative (union, university, & K-12) in-service teacher education program, its development and its attempts to prepare teachers for urban environments.

Among the important beliefs of the University of St. Thomas and AFT Local 59 are that institutions of higher education must respond to the specific needs of learners regardless of the setting and become partners in educational reform. Teacher training institutions and local K-12 school districts and teachers need to collaborate in order to be able to flexibly meet the needs and demands of learners in a variety of settings (Goodlad, 1984).

Collaboration encourages interaction and feedback that reinforces multiple teaching strategies (McDonnell & Pascal, 1979). In the partnership, the higher education institution brings research on effective instruction and models varied methods of delivery. The Union and K-12 teachers contribute their current strategies for cross-curricular teaching and their perspectives on classroom organization and management.

Introduction

The University of St. Thomas and the Federation of Teachers, Local No. 59, AFT of the Minneapolis, MN school district united to break new ground. As a result of a collaborative venture between a school district, a teachers' union, and a university, a distinctive and exciting master's degree program emerged. This program boldly linked a teachers' union with a teachers' training institution and offered on-site graduate course work at the union office complex. The Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction was co-sponsored through the efforts of Doug Warring, Associate Dean of

Outreach and Extended Degree, University of St. Thomas; Louise Sundin, President of Local 59, AFT; and Carol Freeman, from the Leadership Center for Minneapolis teachers. The significant component of this innovative degree program was the joint development of special courses especially applicable for the practitioner in an urban setting, and thus the program was dubbed "The Urban Master's Program".

The University of St. Thomas chose to develop and deliver this Urban Master's Program based on the following philosophical beliefs underpinned by the mission of the University and current research on adult education:

1) It is a legitimate role of the University of St. Thomas to respond to the needs of adult learners in an off-campus environment. This response represents a shift from the traditional viewpoint that maintains that the university environment is the most appropriate educational setting in which to cultivate intellectual pursuits (Newman & Svaglic, 1982);

2) Regardless of setting, the University must maintain its commitment to instructional excellence;

3) Teacher preparing institutions need to become partners in reform with K-12 institutions to meet the educational challenges of the decade;

4) The cohort model of program design for graduate study provides the best support mechanism for adult learners in off-campus settings; and,

5) K-12 teachers need to become partners with the University for the development and design of meaningful learning experiences that are applicable to their professional career.

Mission of the Institution

The University of St. Thomas has been involved in graduate teacher education for nearly fifty (50) years and with extended degree programs since

1976, offering initial licensure programs, advanced learner programs, and in-service programs to teachers throughout Minnesota and in several other locations. The programs were specifically designed to prepare teachers to meet the varied needs of their students in increasingly diverse communities. The University, through its graduate programs in education, is committed to a specific kind of teacher development that provides a sound theoretical base upon which to build knowledge and skills to meet the varied needs of the teachers and communities it serves.

For the past five years the University of St.Thomas has been working with the Minnesota Department of Education to address the issue of increasing the level of competency of Minnesota teachers. With a firm resolve and commitment to maintain the same excellence in new education programs as is found in existing programs, the Urban Master's Program was designed to prepare teachers in a nontraditional manner for service in public inner city schools. Many of these teachers are currently employed in inner city schools and may lack either the financial resources necessary to attend traditional campus graduate programs or the time to devote to commuting to a campus program scheduled in a traditional format. Practically speaking, the program was designed to provide educational access to people previously denied.

Program Development

Initial discussions for the Urban Master's Program began in 1988. Subsequent planning and development continued until the summer of 1989 when the first cohort of teachers was enrolled in the program. Local 59 and the University of St.Thomas both strongly believed that institutions of higher education must respond to the specific needs of learners regardless of the setting and become partners in educational reform (Carnegie Forum, 1986 &

1988). Most teacher preparing institutions have yet to play a significant role in collaborating with schools professionally to meet the challenges of the 21st century (Jessup, 1985). St. Thomas and the Minneapolis Teachers' Union negotiated an agreement for a teacher development program to be delivered in the district with a commitment to excellence from both institutions. One of the collaborative intents was to meet the challenges presented to educators in the Holmes Group report (1986). This collaboration required a shift in priorities for some UST personnel who were accustomed to the typical university assessment of faculty in terms of what they contribute to their discipline rather than what they contribute to their students through good teaching methodologies (Hill, Wise & Shapiro, 1989). This type of ideological shift encouraged interaction and feedback between the partners that reinforces effective teaching strategies (Mc Donnell & Pascal, 1979). This type of collaboration is also what Goodlad (1984) called for between teacher training institutions and local K-12 school districts to meet the demands of learners in a variety of settings. In this partnership, the higher education institution brought research on effective instruction and modeled various methods of delivery. The Union, whose membership consists of K-l2 teachers, contributed current classroom strategies for thematic teaching and fresh perspectives on curricular design among other things. The fifth and seventh cohorts of educators are currently enrolled in the Master's Program in Curriculum and Instruction. In addition a special cohort was created for teachers of the gifted and talented and another two for special education teachers, one with EBD licensure (cohort #6), and another with ECSE licensure (cohort #8). Other programs are currently being planned.

Special Features of Program

Cohort Model

A distinguishing feature of the program design is the cohort model. Students in groups of 20 - 30 take the same courses and work together in the program for its duration (18 - 22 months). Classes are scheduled on an evening and/or weekend basis selected by the cohort. The University believes that the cohort model is a supportive way for adult students to learn. It is also a way for the University to model group process and classroom interaction for teachers. The accumulation of a common knowledge base among cohort members results in direct exploration of ideas and support for experimentation with those ideas in the teachers' classrooms. Within the cohort model, the administration and faculty from the University of St. Thomas in conjunction with the Local 59 leaders are able to identify specific student and district needs and plan course work and other professional development activities appropriately. The Urban Master's Program is unique in having a degree structure built around a core of required courses supplemented by electives that are created and chosen by the students. While some of the courses are chosen by the district and Union, most are chosen by the cohort members.

Program Components

An example of courses that have been sponsored by the Union include an educational research and dissemination course, a critical thinking course, and a topics course dealing with educational reform. These courses are integrated with the traditional University courses (see attached course list and schedule), Principles of Educational Research (CIED 500), Theories of Cognition (CIED 610), and Special Topics in Educational Reform (CIED 690)

and are team taught by University of St.Thomas faculty and district personnel with expertise in an applicable area. The collaborative teaching efforts resulted in the development of a new course, Dimensions in Mentoring (CIED 612) and the restructuring of an existing course, Communication, Conflict Management and Decision Making (CIED 704) to include specific elements of site-based management. The teaming also produced a variety of additional topics courses such as Multicultural Education, Curriculum Individualization, Process, Power and Empowerment for Educators, Organizational Change, and Leadership and Organizational Development.

Although the University of St. Thomas has been involved in extended degree programs for seventeen (17) years, this is the first time it has delivered a program co-sponsored and financially supported by another group – the Federation of Teachers, Local 59, AFT. The Union has provided in-kind contribution for teachers for specific courses, for staff (for the development, articulation and coordination of the program), and for time, meeting space and duplication of course materials. The University of St.Thomas has responded by reducing course tuition and providing flexibility in the course offerings and schedules. These are productive responses to meet today's students' needs according to Warren (1986).

Adults as Learners

From the inception of graduate education programs on campus, the University of St. Thomas has taken the view that the need for life-long learning was a reality for professional teachers and others who were involved in the process of learning and in the delivery of education, training or other professional development activities. The view that higher education should be for the achievement and maintenance of competence and the acquisition

of the art of the utilization of knowledge (Whitehead, 1949) seemed to serve as an underlying attitude among the administration and faculty of the UST graduate school. Over the years self-determination of professional growth has become an increasingly normal and normative approach for how adult students view and use education.

UNESCO (1986) concluded that the term 'lifelong education and learning' denotes an overall scheme aimed both at restructuring the existing education system and at developing the entire education potential outside the education system; in such a scheme men and women are the agents of their own education. This is consistent with other views on adult learning.

The andragogical process of adult learning notes the importance of a collaborative, consensual, and supportive climate for adult learning (Knowles, 1970). By creating a partnership with the Local 59 the University of St. Thomas agreed to be collaborative. The University's belief in the cohort model provided the framework for support that is so sustaining to adult learners. Teaming university faculty with students, who were also teachers, to teach specified courses allowed the district, Union and teachers to share in the decision making process that is vital to adult learners. Allowing both the union leadership and the students to choose relevant electives for their program assured the program participants that the University was truly concerned with relevancy, relationship, and responsibility -- the 3 R's of adult learning (Kidd, 1973).

Due to the unprecedented growth in the number of adult students enrolled in classes for college credit, The College Board undertook a study in 1988 to determine how adults (over 25) study for college credit. From the many findings of the study emerged the picture of the busy adult student who tries to balance graduate school (30% of adult students are enrolled in

graduate school) with a full time job (80% of adult graduate students hold full time jobs) and family commitments (75% of adult graduate students are married). It is no wonder that seventy (70) percent of adults seeking a degree give convenient location as a prime reason for selecting a college or program (Aslanian & Brickell, 1988). The University responded to the needs of the Minneapolis teachers by agreeing to deliver the Urban Master's Program on the teachers' turf even though the actual distance from the union office complex to the campus is less than ten miles. The convenience of parking, familiarity with the building, and comfort of environment were more important to the students than the importance of the library on campus, for example. A survey was conducted with the graduates of the first four cohorts. In responding to the items, ninety (90) percent indicated that they either could not or would not have been able to come onto campus to complete a master's degree.

A 1980 study of adult learning conducted by The College Board included these two conclusions:

1. Most adults don't learn for the sake of intellectual pursuit. They return to school to learn because they want to use their newly acquired knowledge.
2. Almost all adults enroll in college because of changing circumstances in their lives. They want to be successful in their changed circumstances (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980).

Teachers enrolled in the Urban Master's Program returned to school for a variety of personal reasons. Many of them enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of the program, even if that was not their primary purpose for returning to school. The majority of teachers in the program enrolled to increase their knowledge of their ever evolving and changing profession and

to improve their classroom teaching. There is no doubt that they want to be successful as teachers facing the educational challenges of the 21st century.

Program Evaluation

The initial evaluation of the program upon completion of the first two cohorts was conducted with focus groups. The focus group participants were asked to speak to what they liked and disliked about the program and to offer suggestions for improvement. Comments from teachers, union leaders and administrators in the district indicated positive change had occurred in both the participants and their respective students which they attributed directly to their involvement in the program. Teachers felt that their professors from the University of St. Thomas brought them knowledge and research that was on the cutting edge. Teachers also felt a new respect from their peers in the district as they began to assume the position of resource people who were current on issues such as site-based management and shared decision making.

Formative and summative evaluations are also conducted during and following each individual course. Students evaluate each course three times. After the first third of the course and after the second third of the course, students evaluate for formative information. The students have suggested that this is somewhat excessive so subsequent programs will have only two formal student evaluations for each course. Students will continue to complete a formative evaluation after the first third of the course and a final summative evaluation of the course during the last class meeting. The program design also requires at least two administrative evaluation visits to be conducted by either the Associate Dean or Dean. To date all evaluations have occurred in each program.

All program graduates were mailed a fifty-four (54) item questionnaire. Of the ninety-four (94), students who successfully completed the full Master's Degree program, sixty (60) graduates returned the questionnaire which was mailed to them approximately one year after their respective graduations. The instrument included items on the quality of instruction, student advising, assignments, texts/readings, overall program, and personal and professional development as well as open-ended free response items.

Of the sixty (60) respondents, ninety (90) percent found the overall classes and program to be very good to excellent. Ninety (90) percent indicated that they would not have enrolled in the program had it not been available at their location. All of the respondents (100%) indicated that the instructors were thought provoking, constructive, and stimulating and that the overall program was stimulating. Ninety-three (93) percent indicated that the program assisted them personally and ninety-seven (97) percent indicated that the program assisted them professionally. Only one in each of the categories indicated that the program was not helpful.

Conclusion

The longevity of the program plus the continued requests for development of additional cohorts speaks not only to its collaborative success, but also to its excellence. One of the most significant findings reported to the University was that program participants were feeling refreshed, re-stimulated and re-energized. This partnership has proven that collaboration between an institution of higher learning, a teachers union, and a local school district can make a difference.

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Appendix A: MFT V Schedule
MASTER OF ARTS IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION K-12

Hours: Tuesdays, 4:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; Summer to be determined
Advisor: Dr. Doug Warring, 962-5277
Extension Librarian: (612) 962-5012; (800) 328-6819, ext. 2-5012 (outstate)

1991 **GRED 688X - Topics: Education Reform** (1 credit)
Mr. Skip Olson

November 5, 9, 12 (T,S,T)

GRED 505X - Social Foundations of Education (3 credits)
Dr. Jim Petersen

December 3, 7, 10 (T,S,T)
January 7, 11, 14
January 21, 25, 28

1992 **EDLD 845X - Communication, Conflict and Decision-Making** (3 credits)
Dr. Debra Pitton

February 25, 29, March 3 (T,S,T)
March 10, 14, 17
March 24, 28, April 7

GRED 612X - Dimensions of Mentoring (3 credits)
Ms. Marilyn Lindquist

April 28, May 2, 5 (T,S,T)
May 12, 16, 19
May 26, 30, June 2

GRED 610X - Theories of Cognition for Instruction (3 credits)
Dr. Kerry Frank
Ms. Marion Helland

June 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 (M, T, W, Th, F) Class times: 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
June 22, 23, 24 (M, T, W)

CIED 532X - Curriculum Trends K-12 (3 credits)
Dr. Ralph Stouffer

September 8, 12, 15 (T, S,T)
September 22, 26, 29
October 6, 10, 13

EDLD 897X - Power and Empowerment (3 credits)
Dr. Dorothy Green

November 3, 7, 10 (T,S,T)
November 17, 21, December 1
December 5, 8, 15

1993 **CIED 500X - Principles of Educational Research** (3 credits)
Dr. Karen Rogers

January 12, 19 (T,S,T)
January 26, 30 (T, S) **(8 - 11:30 a.m.)**
April 13, May 4 (T, T)

Educational Research and Dissemination
Ms. Janet Kujat
Ms. Kathy Kopka

January 30, February 2, 9, (S, T, T) **(12 - 4:30 p.m.)**
February 16, 23, March 2 (T, T,T)

GIFT 722X - Instructional Models in GCT K-12 (3 credits)
Dr. Linda Emerick

March 9, 13, 16 (T,S,T)
March 20, 23, April 6 (S, T, T)
April 20, 24, 27 (T, S, T)

CIED 689X - Topics: Assessment & Evaluation of Curriculum (2 credits)
Mr. Paul Anderson

May 18, 22, 25 (T,S,T)
June 1, 5, 8

CIED 689X - Topics: Learning Styles (2 credits)
June 16, 17, 18, 19 (W, Th, F, S) 8 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
June 21 (M)

CIED 688X - Topics: Individualizing Curriculum (1 credit)
Dr. Doug Warring

June 23, 24, 25 (W, Th, F) 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Final Examination
June 30 9 a.m.

Total: 30 Semester Credits Anticipated Graduation: July, 1993 2/2/93

Appendix B: MFT ECSE
License & Master of Arts in Early Childhood Special Education

Location: MFT Headquarters
Hours: Thursdays, 4:30 - 8:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Advisor: Dr. Patricia Blasco, (612) 962-5389
Extension Librarian: (612) 962-5012; (800) 328-6819, ext. 2-5012 (outstate)

1993 **SPED 750X - Survey of Exceptionality** (3 credits) Ms. Laura Medwetz
January 14, 16, 21 (Th, S, Th)
January 28, 30, February 4
February 11, 13, 18

SPED 744X - Fundamentals: Infants and Toddlers (3 credits) Ms. Kathleen Corrigan
March 11, 13, 18 (Th, S, Th)
April 1, 3, 8
April 15, 17, 22

SPED 778X - Fundamentals: Preschoolers (3 credits)
Summer 1993: (Dates to be set later by instructor & students)

SPED 787X - Assessment Strategies: Early Childhood Special Education (3 credits)
Summer 1993: (Date to be set later by instructor & students)

SPED 740X - Methods: Early Childhood Special Education (3 credits)
September 9, 11, 16 (Th, S, Th)
September 23, 25, 30
October 14,16, 21

SPED 785X - Behavior Management (3 credits)
November 4, 6, 11 (Th, S, Th)
November 18, 20, December 2
December 16, 18, 23

1994 **SPED 770X - Acquisition of Speech and Language** (3 credits)
January 6, 8, 13 (Th, S, Th)
January 27, 29, February 3
February 17, 19, 24

SPED 742X - Sensory and Physical Impairment (3 credits)
March 10, 12, 17 (Th, S, Th)
April 7, 9, 14
April 28, 30, May 6

SPED 751X - Positioning and Handling: Infants - Adults (3 credits)
Summer, 1994: (Dates to be set later by students & instructor)

SPED 743X - Working with Families (3 credits)
Summer, 1994: (Dates to be set later by students & instructor)

SPED 690X - Practicum: Pre-Kindergarten Practicum Regular Education (3 credits)
(Dates to be set later)

SPED 741X - Practicum: Infant Education (3 credits)
(Dates to be set later)

SPED 735X - Practicum: Early Childhood Special Education (3 credits)
(Dates to be set later)

Additional Course for MA

1995 CIED 500X - Educational Research (3 credits)
January 12, 14, 19 (Th, S, Th)
February 2, 4, 9
February 23, 25, March 2

SPED 799X - Integrative Paper (1 credit)
Final paper for MA may be started after successful completion of CIED 500X

Additional State Requirements for Early Childhood Special Education License, Which May Be Taken At Undergraduate or Graduate Level (Your adviser will determine if these basic requirements have been completed upon a review of your transcripts.)

SPED 602 -	Human Growth and Development
GRED 610 -	Theories of Cognition for Instruction
GRED 623 -	Personal and Community Health and Drugs
GRED 615 -	Human Relations and Multicultural Education

License: 36 semester credits Anticipated Graduation Date: December, 1994 (License)
1/18/93a
MA: 40 semester credits Anticipated Graduation Date: May, 1995 (MA Special Ed)